



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

## Maryland Sheriffs' Association



### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair and  
Members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Chief of Staff David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee  
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee  
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: March 3, 2022

RE: **SB 833 Cannabis – Legalization and Regulation**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **OPPOSE SB 833** and have raised objections to all efforts to legalize cannabis over the past several years. Understanding there is broad interest in this topic, MCPA and MSA would like to raise an issue that we strongly believe should be addressed should legislation pass to take steps to legalize cannabis and place the issue on the ballot for voters to decide.

The current decriminalization of less than ten grams of marijuana creates a condition where there is nothing other than confiscation of the marijuana and issuance of a civil citation to prohibit smoking and the consumption of marijuana while driving a motor vehicle. These circumstances will be exacerbated should cannabis be legalized. This presents the opportunity for very dangerous situations on our roadways.

To address this, SB 833 should be amended to prohibit a driver of a motor vehicle from smoking or consuming marijuana in the passenger area of the motor vehicle on a highway and prohibit an occupant of a motor vehicle from smoking marijuana in the passenger area of the motor vehicle on a highway.

Legislation that has been introduced in past years (SB 418, 2019 Session) provides a remedy for this problem by narrowly defining the circumstances where the danger to the public created by smoking or consuming marijuana is sufficient to cause that behavior to become a misdemeanor punishable by a fine. Moving consuming marijuana in a vehicle from a civil offense to a misdemeanor would also require the individual engaging in this reckless behavior to provide identification. This will remove the anonymity inherent in the current civil infraction status and will help create a disincentive to this behavior.

MCPA and MSA believe amending the bill in this manner will increase the safety of our citizens and visitors as they drive on the highways across Maryland. MCPA and MSA respectfully requests your consideration.